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August 8, 1952

R. E. DIAHAN: REAGAN

The President has sent the following letter to Honorable Robert Ramspeck, Chairman of the Civil Service Commission:

Dear Mr. Chairman:

On July 14, 1951, I requested the National Security Council to make an investigation of the administration of Federal employee security programs relating to the denial of employment and the suspension and removal of employees in the interest of national security. Pursuant to that request, a study was made by the Interdepartmental Committee on Internal Security. Its report, prepared in collaboration with staff of the Civil Service Commission, has been submitted to me by the National Security Council.

This report recommends that certain uniform standards and procedures be established to apply to all agencies where employee security programs are in effect. It also recommends that provision be made for Civil Service Commission review of agency decisions in security risk cases.

In addition, the Interdepartmental Committee on Internal Security, in transmitting its report to the National Security Council, called attention to the confused situation which exists by reason of there being three general programs dealing with the denial of employment and the suspension and separation of Government employees. These general programs were described by the Committee as relating to loyalty, security, and suitability under civil service regulations, respectively, and the Committee pointed out that it is extremely difficult if not impossible to draw clear lines of demarcation among them. In order to eliminate this confusion, the Committee recommended that a study be made to effect a single general program covering eligibility for employment in the Federal service, whether on grounds of loyalty, security, or suitability. It is my understanding that the Civil Service Commission agrees with this proposal.

I have given considerable thought to the recommendations contained in this report. I have concluded that the most desirable action at this time would be to merge the loyalty, security, and suitability programs, thus eliminating the overlapping, duplication, and confusion which apparently now exist. It is my understanding that the status of the incumbent employees loyalty program is now so advanced that there would be little or no obstacle to accomplishing this from the standpoint of the future needs of that phase of the loyalty program. Accordingly, I should like for the Civil Service Commission to take the necessary steps to provide me with a plan for combining the three existing programs into one at the earliest practicable date. To achieve this end, I am directing all Executive departments and agencies to cooperate fully with the Commission and to furnish the Commission with such personnel and other assistance as it may require.

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Pending action to merge the existing three programs, it does not seem advisable to issue an Executive Order establishing uniform standards and procedures comprising an over-all Government employee security program, with provision for Civil Service Commission review of agency decisions. Such an Executive Order would presumably have only temporary effect, since it would be superseded shortly by the new program I am requesting the Commission to prepare. I believe we can utilize our efforts most effectively by going straight to what we regard as the best solution.

In the meantime, however, departments and agencies having employee security programs should reexamine their procedures in the light of the findings and recommendations of the Interdepartmental Committee. The Committee's report contains a great deal of worthwhile material which should provide valuable guidance for those responsible for the formulation and administration of personnel security procedures, and which should assist them in assuring adequate procedural safeguards for the protection of all personnel who are subject to employee security programs.

I am sending copies of this letter and the report of the Interdepartmental Committee on Internal Security to the heads of all Executive departments and agencies.

Sincerely yours,

HARRY S. TRUMAN

The text of the memorandum to the heads of the Executive departments and agencies follows:

TO THE HEADS OF ALL EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES:

I am sending you a copy of a letter I have addressed today to the Chairman of the Civil Service Commission, together with a copy of a report on Federal employee security programs which has been prepared by the Interdepartmental Committee on Internal Security.

On the recommendation of the Interdepartmental Committee and other interested Government agencies, I have requested the Civil Service Commission to prepare a plan for a single general program covering eligibility for employment in the Federal service, whether on grounds of loyalty, security, or suitability. To help the Commission in preparing this plan, all Executive departments and agencies are authorized and directed to cooperate fully with the Commission and to furnish it with such personnel and other assistance as it may require.

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Each department and agency having an employee security program should give careful study to the report of the Interdepartmental Committee and should reexamine its own program in the light of that report with a view to making sure that adequate procedural safeguards are provided.

HARRY S. TRUMAN